

The Onset of Civil War
March – June 1919



“... С крепкой красной армией – мы непобедимы. Без крепкой армий -- мы неминуемая жертва Колчака, Деникина и Юденича.»

“... With a strong Red Army – we are invincible. Without a strong army, we inevitably are sacrificed to Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenich.”

Map 5

The Onset of Civil War // March – June 1919

Colored lithographic print, 64 x 100 cm. Scale 1:3,360,000

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Historical Background and Thematic Design

The fifth map in the series covers the first real battles in the Civil War, when counterrevolutionary troops under Admiral Kolchak assaulted Red Army forces along four major fronts in an effort to retake the Volga region. The Whites quickly recaptured key posts lost the previous year, but proved incapable of securing their gains without adequate reserves or Allied logistical support. Red forces, under the command of Generals S. S. Kamenev and M. V. Frunze, held the eastern side of the Volga and launched a major counterattack in late April, forcing the White's into retreat.

At the same time, the Red Army invaded Ukraine, partly to retake regions occupied by the Germans, and continued to fight Polish forces along an undefined border running through the Baltic provinces and Belarus. In the south General Denikin's Armed Forces of Southern Russia had retaken the north Caucasus and defended the Donbas, while General Wrangel captured Tsaritsyn in June and carried out subsequent campaigns in the Dnepr-Volga corridor. In what may have been the greatest strategic mishap of the war, Denikin and Kolchak, overwhelmed by inadequate communications and transportation, missed the opportunity to link forces for a combined assault on Moscow.



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Figure 11

Red, in varying shades, is the map's most striking visual element, its most notable application the series of five-pointed stars centered on Moscow. Reminiscent of a cosmic event, they originate dramatically from a bright yellow star exploding over the heart of Russia. The shadings of color from light red to dark red intensify as they move further away from their origin. Exuding power, the color red impresses us as acting as a weapon or force, as though defending Communist Russia from enemies assaulting its periphery. Red also signifies the resilience of the Red Army, its ability to withstand assault, and the expansion of communism in Russia. Bavaria and Hungary, both under communist rule at the time, are also in bold red.

A large furling red flag over Moscow identifies it as the seat of the Comintern and the R.S.F.S.R. Smaller red flags identify headquarters of Red Army major field army groups at the four fronts.

The most dominant visual symbols are soldiers. Red Army soldiers with rifles and bayonets strike defensive positions along all four fronts. A Red Army soldier, appearing as though to strike with a scythe, leads the assault of his forces into Ukraine. Green figures of soldiers with rifles and bayonets, in addition to Cossacks with lances on horseback, represent Kolchak's Siberian army, which attacks along Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Urals fronts. Red Army soldiers and Cossacks on horseback depict the heavy fighting in the Dnepr-Volga corridor in southern Russia and Ukraine, while a Cossack with a lance on horseback depicts the assault on the northern Caucasus. Polish forces are seen approaching the Russo-Polish front, their divisional groupings indicated by yellow quadrangles. Kneeling soldiers, in blue, bearing rifles and wearing Prussian helmets, represent forces of the German-backed government of Latvia.

White Admiral Kolchak's Offensive and Retreat in the East

The region situated between the southern Urals and the Volga, which more or less dominates the northeast and southeast sectors of the map, depicts a complex ensemble of figures and symbols representing Admiral Kolchak's spring offensive that occurred from March to April, 1919 and the beginnings of the Red Army's counter-offensive, April-May, 1919. **Figure 12**

On Kolchak's (eastern) side of the action there are six green figures of soldiers and Cossack cavalry representing the Northern Army of General Gajda; the Western Army under the command of General Khanzhin; the Southern Army of Ataman Dutov; and the Urals Army of Poletov.

Action on the Red Army (west) side of the offensive is illustrated by five figures of red soldiers representing Mezheninov's Third Army and Shorin's Second Army; Tukhachevskii's Fifth Army; the Turkestan Army of Zinoviev and the First Army of Gai; and two soldiers who are unidentified. Three furled red flags flying above the Volga cities of Kazan, Simbirsk, and Samara indicate, respectively, the headquarters of Shorin's Northern Front, Kamenev's Western Front, and Frunze's Southern Front.



Kolchak's "Ufa Offensive" was planned to take control of the region between the Urals and the Volga River, his major objective being the capture of the river communication lines and important rail crossings over the Volga and Kama rivers. By mid-April it reached its furthest line of advance, having become bogged down in the spring thaw, or *rasputitsa*, and stopped by Red resistance. Nevertheless, the Whites captured roughly 150,000 square miles of territory and 5,000,000 inhabitants, and forced Moscow to mass mobilize manpower and materiel for assignment to the eastern front.

The thick red line running north to south through the towns of Glazov, Bugulma, Orenburg, past Uralsk, and towards the Caspian Sea indicates Red Army defensive positions at the beginning of the offensive. The green spearheads pushing towards the west indicate more or less the furthest point of advance of the White opposition forces during the final days of May. The lighter red and pink spearheads indicate the directions of Red Army counterattacks in the final days of April.

Moscow and Center Region

In the center of the map over Moscow, at the center of the series of expanding stars, there are two large furled red flags, one with letters P. C. Φ. C. P. (R. S. F. S. R.), the other with the title COMINTERN. Together, attached to the same hoist, they symbolize the marriage of the newly-incorporated government of Russia, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, with the Communist International, or Comintern, the international communist organization that advocated global communism. Lenin convened the First Communist International in Moscow in early March 1919. He intended it to be the arm of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee that would serve as a vehicle for exporting the revolution. Lenin considered Germany an important external target to establish communism across the globe.

Ukrainian Front

Over Western Ukraine are symbols associated with the turmoil enveloping the region in winter-spring of 1919. These include: figures of three soldiers in light blue, two with yellow shakos, with the name "Petliura"; a series of five rectangles, yellow and blue, stretching from Mozyr to Kamenets-Podolski; over Kiev, a large figure of a Red Army soldier wielding a scythe; a circular red figure between Kiev and Cherkasy, with the date "15 March," and red spearheads projecting towards Rovno, Uman, and Kamenets-Podolski; a circle, blue and yellow, around Uman with the date "16 March"; small green arrows spreading in various directions; and a black arrow advancing from western Ukraine into Hungary.

Semon Petliura's Directory of the Ukrainian National Republic, which had replaced the German puppet government headed by Skoropadsky in December 1918, was driven out of Kiev in early February 1919 by a provisional Soviet Ukrainian government of left-wing Ukrainian Bolsheviks backed by the Red Army. The remnants of the Directory, as symbolized by the three figures in light blue, reconstituted themselves in Galicia, then the theater of a bitter war between the West Ukrainian National Republic and Poland. Petliura, unable to form an alliance with the anti-Bolshevik White Russians, who opposed Ukrainian independence, undertook negotiations with Poland, signing an armistice with Warsaw in June. The series of yellow and blue rectangles winding through Galicia may symbolize the cease-fire line stretching approximately from Mozyr to Kamenets-Podolski.

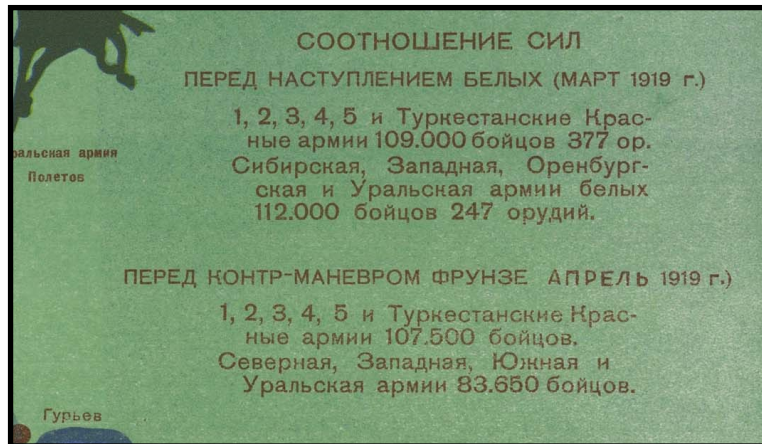
Under the aegis of Red Army, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, as illustrated by the Red Army figure wielding a scythe, installed a Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in Kiev in February. Around March 15, they began moving their forces into Galicia, almost immediately capturing the UNR-held city of Uman. Encouraged by the French evacuation of Odessa in April 1919, the Ukrainian SSR and the Red Army planned to continue their advance into Moldavia, and then into Hungary, as indicated by the black arrow, in a planned effort to support Bela Kun's communist Hungarian regime.

Odessa and Allied Withdrawal

Many symbols in the vicinity of Odessa and in the Crimea represent the deterioration of Allied support in the region, in particular France's failure at establishing a long-term occupation zone in southern Russia in an effort to support the White army. Around the port of Odessa is a dark green field with the text, "Franco-Greek landing force"; the figure of a soldier in green at ease; three ships at port; a green cross against a red background inside a green square near Odessa; pink arrows pointing in the direction of Nikolaev and Kherson, and a red arrow advancing on Odessa; the symbol of red \wedge within a green circle, with the date "5 April"; and a green cross inside a green circle near Kherson. Over the Crimea are red symbols of three explosions; red arrows pointing towards Sebastopol and Feodosia; and a ship at harbor at Sebastopol.

French and other Allied forces withdrew from the region by April, because of a lack of support from their respective home fronts. As the Allies departed public order broke down in Odessa. French troops carried out last-minute executions, including eleven civilians whom they suspected of being Bolshevik agents, as memorialized by the symbol of the green cross against a red background within a green square. The symbol of a red \wedge within a green circle, with the date "5 April," signifies the arrest and execution of the professional revolutionary, Ivan Smirnov, known as "the Swallow."

Transcription of Text



Correlation of Forces

At the onset of the Whites (March 1919)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Turkestan Red
Army 109,000 soldiers 377 guns.
Siberian, Western, Orenburg
and Urals army of the Whites
112,000 fighters 247 guns.

Before Frunze's Counterattack (April 1919)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Turkestan Red
Army 107,500 soldiers.
Northern, Western, Southern and
Urals army 83,650 fighters.

Conventional Symbols

1. *Uprising of Soviet power.*
2. *Bombing the defenseless city of Kherson at close range by the French fleet.*
3. *French shooting of eleven civilians in Odessa, only one suspected of Bolshevism.*
4. *The position of the Red armies in early March, late April and May.*
5. *Kulak-SR riots.*
6. *Bandits.*
7. *Uprising of the Cossacks in the middle reaches of the Don.*
8. *Proclamation of Soviet republics in Hungary 21 March, in Bavaria 7 April.*
9. *Torture and death of communist T. Lastochkina, drowned by the French general d'Anselme.*
10. *Formation of army groups on the Eastern Front: Northern Comrade Shorin, Southern Comrade Frunze.*
11. *Going on the offensive on the Southern front Comrade Frunze and the defeat of the Whites in the area Buguruslan-Bugulma 28 April.*

The Reds commenced their counterattack at the end of the spring thaw, effectively cutting off Kolchak's center forces between the Urals and the Volga-Kama rivers, and placing his army on the defensive for the remainder of the war.

